

5 Oct 1978 Poet buried in rocking chair

By Kris Radish

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MIDWAY, Wasatch County — If all those golfers at Wasatch Mountain State Park knew who was watching them from the top of the hill, a few games and averages would most likely improve.

William Walter Wilson has been gazing across the Heber Valley and what is now the Wasatch Mountain State Park Golf Course since 1880. That's the year Wilson died and was buried on a hill overlooking the valley.

Pioneer gravesites scattered across Utah's hills and valleys are not uncommon, but Wilson's grave is special enough to deserve some notice.

His gravestone reads, "Mormon, pioneer, polygamist, poet, farmer, miner and militia man," and if that's not enough, Wilson was buried right on that Midway hill sitting in his rocking chair.

That's right — in his rocker. His gravestone reads, "He was buried under these oaks where he enjoyed much leisure time. Legend has it he was buried here in a sitting position in order to see the sun rise over the majestic mountains lighting the beautiful valley below."

Not a bad idea, for the view from Wilson's hill is spectacular. His oaks are the tallest trees for miles around and the view goes on and on from mountain to mountain.

Wasatch County Commissioner Pete Coleman, a lifelong Midway resident, says he remembers hearing stories about the Wilson grave since he was a little boy.

"My dad used to tell me all kinds of stories about that grave, and he used to say that Mr. Wilson was buried sitting right in his rocking chair," Coleman remembered.

Don Morgan, assistant supervisor of Wasatch Park, says it's all true. "Some of his family members come up here for a reunion once in a while," Morgan said. "He desired to be buried in a rocking chair looking out across the mountains and that's what happened."

Wilson once owned the land he is now buried on. His descendants erected a small memorial to him on that Wasatch hill in 1975.

They remembered him "spending many hours with poetry in this picturesque setting overlooking beautiful Heber Valley and surrounded by the mountains he loved."

No doubt Wilson wrote many a poem about the sunsets and sunrises, never dreaming there would be an 18-hole golf course in his old back yard.



Deseret News photo by Kris Radish

Monument marks the grave of William Walter Wilson.